Coffee, Cocaine & Cock

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Coffee, Cocaine & Cock

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Misunderstandings over Galahad's interests at Camelot's strangest coffee shop...

Notes

written for Hannigramfanfic's coffee shop AU month.

Chapter 1

The bell above the door rang and Galahad let out a huff. He was sat on the sofa next to the counter, feet up on a low table. And he refused to open his eyes to even acknowledge the person. They were finally quiet and it was too near closing for him to care.

“Gawain!” Galahad called out, eyes still closed. It was his brother’s turn to man the counter, and he was so done for the day. In fact, he was pretty fried. He wasn’t sure how he’d managed his 6 hour shift on top of pulling an all nighter on his paper then leading a tutorial in the morning. He hadn’t even been able to make it from the counter any further than the comfy chair he now sat in, rather than getting back to his apartment.

The customer made his way to the counter, and after a moment cleared his throat.

Galahad let out a heavy sigh, opening his eyes he called for his brother again, earning a raised brow from the customer.

He was not their usual customer, to say the least. Dressed in a casual suit, his beard neatly trimmed. Roguishly handsome, though that maybe wasn't relevant. Despite being the casual side of business-casual, the guy wasn't a stoner. And, realistically, that was somewhere in the region of 80% of their clientele. The other 20% being students from the local Camelot School of Engineering who just wanted cheap, strong, coffee. And, well it didn't hurt that they were one of the few openly LGBT friendly places near campus.

Gawain and a few of his friends had opened the coffee shop two years earlier and he wasn't sure how they hell they were still in business. They made plenty of money but business sense often seemed to be lacking. They spent most of their time high, as did a lot of their hipster customers in this run-down, but up-and-coming end of the city. The place had a semi-permanent haze of weed that Galahad wasn't sure he'd ever be used to - though he seemed the only one.

Now and then they got these customers. The ones who needed a drink and just saw them right there next to the subway. Usually they stepped through the door and realised their mistake, a few even turned and left. This guy was not leaving and apparently Gawain wasn't going to show either.

"Ugh." Galahad voiced his disdain as he pulled himself out of the chair, picked up his own half cold coffee and went behind the counter.

He noticed the guy looking him up and down with a slight sneer, his eyes ending on Galahad's cup - the one Gawain bought him that read 'Cocaine and Cock'. A little inside joke that really wasn't funny at all.

"Can I help you?" Galahad finally bit out some words, customer service wasn't his strong point even when he'd had a good night's sleep.

The man's eyes narrowed in on him and he wondered why the hell all the people like this didn't just turn and walk out as soon as they came in. There was a Starbucks right on the next street, on the main strip - he was half tempted to tell the guy he might want to try there instead.

"Is a cup of coffee too much to ask?" The man responded tersely. Galahad quirked a brow, a slight smile creeping to the corner of his mouth. Sure all the customers like this were usually rude especially when he started it, but this was a different kind of rude. Not affronted as the rest were, the man came across as though he couldn't be bothered either. Which wasn't the same thing as when customers treated him like he was beneath them because he was working in a coffee shop.

It could almost be banter, in another context. Or maybe even this one.

So Galahad replied, "No need to be a dick about it. We've got plenty of coffee, what kind do you want?" His tone was light, almost playful. He'd really had enough of today and if the choices were be rude to the guy or be cheeky with the guy, he was going to chose cheeky and

have his fun before handing the belligerent customer off to his brother. If he ever damn well came out from the back.

The eyes narrowed further in on him and the man's mouth and nose twitched so briefly into a snarl that Galahad almost missed it. He was glad he didn't, because it was so damn hot that Galahad nearly asked for the guy's number.

The man was about to say something further, probably something not nice considering it started with a growl, but was interrupted by Gawain spilling out from the back room and practically crashing into the counter.

"Shit. There you are. Tristan, right?" Gawain was clearly high and looked a mess, which was really not that out of the ordinary. "You want a coffee or something before we get to it?"

Gawain turned and jumped in surprise when he saw Galahad stood behind the counter, "I thought you left. Didn't your shift end."

Galahad rolled his eyes and huffed a sigh - of course his brother didn't even notice he'd stayed when no one came to take the next shift. It really *was* a miracle they were still in business. Even more of a miracle that they actually made seriously good money. Hipsters had a lot of disposable income given that none of them could afford a mortgage. After bills were paid it was luxuries all the way. And a lot of them had serious enough recurring munchies to keep the shop running low on snacks and baked goods.

"Black coffee please." Another terse response that caught both Galahad and Gawain by surprise - Galahad as he had every intention of leaving and it was clearly directed at him, and Gawain because he once more seemed bewildered by what was going on.

Galahad took a deep breath, levelling his shoulders as he let it out, and started with the coffee grounds.

When their parents had died, his brother Gawain had walked into this coffee shop with his 'business partners' and bought it there and then. Galahad instead invested some and was sinking the rest at an alarming rate into his education. He really didn't want to see his big brother fail in his venture so somehow he had ended up working there.

"So, you got the plans I emailed?" Gawain was talking to the customer again now. The man looked really, for want of a better word, moody - and Galahad wondered how much of that was down to him. And… couldn't help but feel a tiny thrill. There really was something about this guy that he just wanted to poke at him and get under his skin. Be the brat he was often accused of being - mostly by stoners, so…

"I did." Was the only answer his brother received but as usual, Gawain was not at all taking in the tone or body language of the person he was talking to.

"Cool, cool." Gawain nodded enthusiastically. "Cool bro, when can you start?"

Galahad could barely hold back a joyous giggle when the man - Tristan - took a long, deep, clearly calming breath, much like the ones Gawain caused him too.

In order to stifle the giggle, Galahad instead blurted, “Plans for what?”

Gawain turned to him, again surprised to see him still there, and this time with a coffee in hand that he was passing over to Tristan.

“You know…” Gawain frowned whilst grinning, his eyes a particular off-putting shade of bloodshot. “*The* plans… for the internet cafe.”

Galahad was grateful he was sliding the coffee across the counter and not handing it, because he’d have likely dropped the damn thing.

“Gawain! You… that was a maybe. You were going to look into it, the costs and… you can’t just remodel half of the storage out back for some hairbrained idea and then wing it!”

Gawain chuckled and shook his head, “You worry too much, baby brother.” He ruffled Galahad’s hair before starting into the back room, Tristan in tow.

Galahad picked up his jacket from the table he’d been sitting at and shoved his arms into it, grumbling under his breath. He needed to talk to Gawain about this when he wasn’t high, even if it meant that he wouldn’t be able to play poke the bear with the stranger again.

Shame, because that really was a bear he wanted to poke.

*

A week later and the man was back, this time looking a lot more casual in loose, dirty jeans and a slightly stained t-shirt. Galahad had to admit it was hard to pull his eyes away from the rip right at the man’s clavicle. It made his mouth water.

“Focus,” he muttered to himself, looking down at the book on the counter. They were pretty quiet so he was making the most of it by getting some reading done - highlighter in hand. He seemed to have already highlighted half of this page, the last thing he needed was a distraction.

“Gawain’s in back.” Galahad said without looking back up again.

“Black coffee.” The man responded as he wandered passed the counter and out to the backrooms.

“Black coffee…” Galahad muttered under his breath. Why were the hot ones always such assholes? He brewed the coffee and set it on the end of the counter nearest the back rooms.

And there is sat for the next three hours. Until Tristan noted it on his way out to get some gear from his van. Galahad smirked, thinking how he must have assumed he hadn’t made the coffee at all.

He was still smirking when Tristan returned carrying some more tools. He made eye contact with Galahad as he set them on the counter and picked up the cup. No hesitation as he gulped it down in a few short pulls. He only broke their gaze when he set the cup down, licked his

lips and picked up the tools once more. He lingered for a few long moments, that left Galahad's heart pounding, the bastard!

Tristan turned and walked into the back rooms without another glance.

Galahad wondered how much he was to blame for the man's hostility - not exactly having started on the right foot. But at the same time, he was weirdly enjoying it, clearly getting under the man's skin and… he did look ridiculously attractive when he was grumpy.

*

Galahad woke with a start when the tool box was dropped onto the counter in front of him.

He'd pulled an all nighter to turn in his paper and was glad that Wednesday afternoons were usually fairly quiet.

He blinked and looked up, bleary-eyed, at Tristan.

For a moment the man's seemingly permanent frown softened and Galahad noted how he looked quickly over him. No doubt taking in his red eyes, mussed hair and - oh shit - the drool at the corner of his mouth.

"Huh?" Galahad wiped the drool away and pulled back from the counter so that he was sitting up once more. Tristan's frown had returned.

"I didn't say anything."

"Black coffee." Galahad stated, not needing to ask, as he got up from the tall stool and began preparing the grounds.

Tristan grunted and proceeded into the back rooms.

It had been a month since Tristan had begun work on the cyber cafe section. He had, rather impressively, built all the tables from scratch, and was now rewiring the entire room so that the computers could be wired into the tables and down through the floor.

If he understood Gawain right, next they would be extending the counter down one end so they could close off the end by the door and turn that into an open archway so people felt welcomed to go through. Galahad had nodded and studied the plans his brother placed in front of him, expertly - and somewhat beautifully - drawn up. It wasn't a load bearing wall so it should be straight forward. Even so, as a one man job - aside from the odd day he'd conscripted Gawain or one of his friends - it was going to take some time.

Gal wasn't sure he could take it.

The man was ridiculously attractive, and Gal's mind longed for a distraction from school. His body too! Well, his body was just tired all the time, but he was constantly keyed up on coffee so ended up barely sleeping despite the exhaustion. Hence catching naps at work.

There was nothing better in his mind than a nice hard fuck tiring him out enough for a good night's sleep. He had no time for dating, but fucking was definitely something he could get on board with!

But… it wasn't going to happen. Aside from being far too busy even for fucking, with school and pulling shifts at the cafe, Tristan clearly was not interested. In fact, Galahad was pretty sure the guy detested him. What was banter and deliberately annoying flirtation from Gal was just plain annoyance from Tristan.

There had been a couple of times he thought the man was checking him out, but his looks had turned to scowls and, anyways, Gal didn't even know if Tristan was into guys.

On the other hand, Galahad had been making no secret of checking Tristan out, often. He was taking every opportunity - before it was dismantled - to stand at the far end of the counter so he could take the occasional break from his books to look in and watch the man huffing and sweating away. It was a little treat he allowed himself once he finished reading a chapter or making a page of notes. And he was neither shy nor subtle about it.

Gal set down the fresh brew and was just trying to focus on the book he'd fallen asleep on, when someone cleared their throat.

He frowned and looked up, not having heard the front door open, and there was no one stood in front of him.

A grunted, "Coffee?" drew his attention to the side, where Tristan stood behind the counter, looking at him expectantly.

Galahad blinked in surprise, pulling his mind back from his studies and looking around, completely unsure as to where the hell he'd put the coffee he'd just made. It clearly wasn't at the other end of the counter - where he'd taken to leaving them for Tristan.

Tristan was frowning at him, but then his eyes flicked passed Galahad and to the coffee cup on the other side of his book. It sat next to his own empty coffee cup. The one Gawain had bought him as a joke - because apparently joking that your brother was a coke head was hilarious when shopping whilst high. Gawain's intended joke being that Gal never touched drugs after being sick to his stomach the one time he tried weed. He'd have thrown it out if it wasn't the perfect size for his favourite beverage - a triple espresso.

"Oh! Sorry, I must have automatically put it there, I haven't had any but I can make a fresh-"

His words stuck in his throat as Tristan grunted again, stepped into his space and reached passed him for the cup.

Gal took a deep breath - drinking in the man's amazing sweaty musk - and then held it, mostly because he wasn't sure his lungs could actually work with the man standing so close.

"S'ok." Tristan grumbled as he brought the coffee cup across the counter and to his lips, still remaining a hair's breadth from Gal. He drank half the coffee down in a few gulps, closing his eyes and savouring it. He looked sated and happy - well, what Galahad was sure passed

for happy with this guy. Not that he had time to dwell on that as his mind was already reeling with thoughts about other ways that serenity might be brought to Tristan's face.

Without intent, Galahad let out a shuddering breath that pulled Tristan violently from his reverie. He immediately stepped back, glaring at Galahad before looking away - at the floor, at the counter. Was there even a little blush across his cheeks?

Gal was sure it wasn't so much from their proximity as it was from the vulnerability he had clearly let slip. If Galahad had learned anything the last few weeks, Tristan was not only extremely private, but took great pains not to even show much of a reaction to anything. If you didn't count disdain.

The blush spoke of a wall that Tristan clearly made a great effort to maintain, being lowered without thought.

Not wanting to make the man any more uncomfortable, Galahad turned back to his book and stated nonchalantly, "Let me know when you need a refill."

Without even a grunt Tristan was gone.

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Gal was shattered. He hated pulling a weekend shift, and generally Gawain didn't schedule him on for them. But Gawain and Bors were off to some music festival or something and Lance had called in sick the day before. He'd said he might be able to come in but Gawain wasn't for having staff cough and sneeze all over customers, and was going to cancel his trip. But Gal volunteered. He had reading to do anyway, a pretty full on presentation looming on the horizon. So he could study at the counter as always.

Only, he hadn't factored in that it was a weekend. The place was heaving, and even with Guinevere working too, they barely had time to relax for a moment here or there.

After an hour and a half, Galahad gave up and took his books into the backroom so they didn't end up with anything spilled on them.

He hadn't been in there all week and he was pleasantly surprised with how well the remodelling was coming on. Just the archway left by the looks of it. There was a sinking feeling in his chest and he thought of not seeing Tristan again.

Which was ridiculous, but…

After the blushing a couple of weeks before, and despite the fact that Tristan had resolutely avoided him since, Gal couldn't stop thinking about him. The more he had avoided him the more he wanted to see of Tristan. He still ogled him as he went about his work, but it wasn't the same. It started to dawn on him just how many times he and Tristan had exchanged sassy banter whilst Gal made his coffee. They were constantly bitchy to each other - snide comments and growls - and yet Gal missed it so much now.

There was something he'd almost figured out about Tristan. Not that he would ever know for sure, not that he would ever ask the man. But… Gal was sure Tristan was at the least bi-curious.

He had dismissed those furtive glances that might have been Tristan checking him out - not least because it would hardly be the first time he was checked out by a straight man. In high school he'd blown a couple of the straight boys because they had - despite being resolutely straight - liked his 'pretty mouth' and he had liked sucking cock, so it all worked out.

But there was something about the way he had blushed. No, about the way he guarded himself so that something like that wouldn't normally happen, that got Gal thinking. Looking back at their interactions, at least the ones that were more than grunts, and generally how he observed the man's demeanour… Tristan kinda reminded him of a couple of his closeted friends...

"Dammit!"

Gal was pulled from his thoughts by the cursing, dropping his books in the process but managing to catch them before they hit the floor. He swore under his breath before setting them on the closest little desk, as he'd intended.

"Arthur?" Gal frowned, wondering if Vera's boyfriend was once again sneaking in through the back, from the side street. "So help me, if you bother Guinevere whilst we're this busy I'll fucking castrate you!" He wasn't a big fan of Arthur's and was muttering these words with real intent as he continued through the soon-to-be cyber cafe and into the remaining storage room.

A figure was hunched over on the floor, picking something up. It took Galahad a moment to realise that it was a bundle of wires and that the figure was Tristan.

"Tristan?"

He, of course, grunted and stood, rounding on Galahad with a frown.

He was holding the bundle of wires, what looked like remnants from all the rewiring he'd done.

"I dropped them." He grumbled.

"What are you doing here?" Gal quirked a confused brow, unable to help the tone of his voice. In his surprise it came out almost unwelcoming.

"I've… It's easier to work when your brother and his friends aren't here. They have already extended the job longer than expected. They're always around - distracted, distracting. I should have finished this weeks ago and I'm still here." Tristan's words came out gruffly but with no harsh emotion.

"Wow," Gal replied, "I think that's the most words you've ever said to me." He broke into a grin that was not shared by Tristan.

“Please don’t you distract me too. I really need to get these wires sorted before I can relay the bits of flooring.”

“I’m distracting?” Galahad grinned, instantly regretting it but having no choice but to hold the aching smile. It was so in his nature to flirt that he hadn’t considered who he was flirting with - the potentially closeted guy who detested him.

He saw Tristan’s jaw tighten, but it wasn’t until red rose a little over his beard-line, that Gal felt the twist in his gut.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable…” he trailed off, not finding any other words and not wanting to make it worse.

“I… I’m not uncomfortable,” Tristan replied softly, his eyes intently locked onto Galahad’s.

Gal was caught off guard by the gentle tone and soft look from a man he had only ever shared bitchy interactions with. He opened his mouth to say something - though he had no idea what - when Vera called into the back room.

“Gal we’ve got a queue forming!”

He turned to look in her direction and when he looked back Tristan was busying himself once more. Gal left him to it.

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Is Tristan gay?!

That question occupied more time than was really acceptable for Gal.

He hadn’t seen Tristan the rest of that Saturday, the man not even having come through to get a coffee. Was Tristan avoiding him or the crowds?

Who knew what was going on in that man’s head!

But the more Gal thought about their interaction in the storeroom, the more annoyed he became. Tristan had been nothing but cold and disdainful with him, he found the sudden change in tone threw him for a loop. And he didn’t like it!

Getting in for the early shift the following Tuesday, he was determined not to even acknowledge the guy, much less automatically make him a coffee as he had been doing.

Gal cashed in the till and started to turn on all the machines, getting the prep out of the way before having to open the doors. He hoped it was a quiet day, he had so much studying he needed to do. In fact, he was starting to wonder about cutting back his hours. But… there was a niggling thought in him that the decision on that was much more based on avoiding Tristan than anything else. And Tristan wouldn’t be around much longer anyway.

Gal’s stomach dropped at the thought, but he carried on without missing a beat.

“Am I too early for coffee?” Tristan’s voice sounded behind him and Gal near jumped out of his skin with fright. He was practically vibrating as he turned to face the man across the counter.

“You scared the shit out of me!”

Tristan tilted his head to the side a little and took him in, like being studied by a wary animal.

As usual, Galahad looked pretty worse for ware - rumpled clothes, bloodshot eyes, messy hair. He was already on his third coffee of the day and it wasn’t even 8am! He’d managed to catch up on a little reading and get to bed around 4, so today was already shaping up just great.

Tristan’s eyes narrowed on him.

He self consciously ran a hand through his hair and watched as Tristan tracked the movement.

Gal cleared his throat, “Coffee?”

“Please.” Tristan replied. His usual gruff tone.

Galahad raised a brow and grinned, “I would hate to embarass you by pointing out that’s the first time you’ve thanked me for coffee. Better late than never, I guess.”

Galahad let out a light chuckle and suddenly felt easier about Tristan. At the least he could get through the rest of the refit, he was sure.

Gal started prepping Tristan’s coffee whilst the machine whirred to life.

“You look tired.”

Galahad was surprised once more by Tristan’s words, his interest. He pulled his own stupid cup off the shelf ready for his own coffee as he replied with a soft chuckle, “That’s because I am tired.”

Tristan clenched his jaw and Galahad was just… confused. The guy was either the most awkward man on the planet, or there was something he was missing.

“Perhaps you should get to bed earlier,” Tristan’s response was gruff and unexpected. From anyone else he might have wondered if it were a line.

Galahad blinked for a moment before deciding to just roll with it. He had no idea what was going on with the guy, but he was sure that reining in his natural flirtation was just making his own head spin. so...

“Is that an offer?” Galahad joked, enjoying the slight blush above the man’s beard line before his eyes went steely and his jaw set.

“Hardly. I don’t have much interest in people who are interested in that,” he nodded his head at the cup in front of Galahad. The Cocaine & Cock cup his brother had given him. The words were a snarl.

“Cocks? Oh, you’re not into guys then?” Gal was surprised at the venom in his own words, realising that he really did seek to get a rise out of the guy in that moment. He wasn’t able to stop himself continuing with a challenging tone, “Funny, because I could swear I’ve caught you checking out my ass a few times now.”

“You know that isn’t what I meant.” Tristan rumbled the words low and annoyed - a regular state of being it seemed.

“I think what you meant is that you have no idea what you’re talking about,” Galahad responded a little more aggressively this time. “And I have to get on with studying. Make your own damn coffee.”

Galahad stormed through the back, though the new cyber section and storeroom, and up the stairs to Gawain and Bor’s flat. He’d get one of them to cover the shift so he could study. Maybe all the rest of his shifts until Tristan was done.

He could feel his face was burning hot. He shouldn’t care, and had no idea why this bothered him so much. But he felt a bitter stab of anger at being judged by the man, hating that he gave a shit about his opinion.

It also didn’t help that he felt like an idiot. All those times he’d caught Tristan looking at him, the man was probably just curious as to whether Gal was coked off his face. Probably didn’t trust him to make his coffee right if he was a crackhead.

Galahad banged on the apartment door much louder than he’d intended.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Gawain interferes, thankfully!

Gawain had given him the week off.

Gal had said it was because he was just too busy at this point in the term, but he was sure Gawain suspected something else was up.

And there was no way he was going to say anything to his brother about Tristan. Because, on cooling down and reflecting, the whole thing was ridiculous!

Why he even cared what a practical stranger thought was beyond him. Maybe it was just because he had never met someone before who threw him so off kilter? Though that was surely more to do with how busy he was with school and how little sleep he'd been getting, than anything else.

His mind flashed once more to the thought of being fucked to exhaustion, getting a good night's sleep curled up next to a nice, strong, body...

Gal shook the thought from his mind and resolved that the following week he'd go out to a bar and get laid. It had been a while, thanks to school work, and that would likely sort everything out nicely.

In the meantime, he spent the week studying and then agreed to pull another weekend shift because Lance, Bors, Gawain and practically everyone they knew, were off to some sort of festival.

Gal arrived at the shop just as Gawain and his buddies were piling camping gear into Lance's beat up old car. They looked like they were all still up from the night before rather than having gotten up early. Gawain flashed him one of his 'you only live once' smiles. To which Gal shook his head and started unlocking the shop. He'd just got behind the counter when Gawain came in via the front door.

It wasn't like he could say much, he'd only had 2 hours sleep himself, though that was thanks to spending half the night in the computer lab on campus trying to write up and save his latest paper on a floppy disc.

"We're off shortly. You all set? Do you have your keys?"

Galahad pointed to the door, "There, so I can lock up after you guys have gone whilst I cash in the till. I'll wait for Vera to get here before I let joe public in. You want me to brew you all

coffee for the road?"

"Nah," Gawain shook his head. "I plan on sleeping whilst Lance drives." He chuckled. "Okay, well… have fun."

Gawain seemed oddly shifty and yet not quite as stoned as normal, which maybe had a correlation. So Gal just nodded, not paying much mind to his brother leaving until he heard the click of the lock.

He looked up and Gawain was the otherside of the door, with Gal's keys, deadlocking Gal into the cafe.

"What the… Gawain, you fucking stoner. What are you doing?" Gal shouted across the room.

There was an answering rustle from the backroom but Gal was too concerned about the situation to really take that in, until…

"What's happening?" Tristan's words were a low gravel.

Gal turned to see the man, stripped to the waist and covered in paint, was stood in the doorway to the back rooms. He tried, but failed, to stop the shiver of desire ripple through him at the sight.

"My idiot brother is what's happening." Gal grumbled as he pulled himself together. "What are you doing?!" Gal repeated, shouting to his brother who still stood on the other side of the glass.

Gawain grinned at him and tapped the window - a note that Gawain must have stuck to the inside of the door on his way out. Galahad ripped it from the door to read it aloud, "Closed for refurbishments. Reopening on Monday… MONDAY!"

Gal slammed his fist on the door but Gawain was still grinning. "Relax, we'll be back tomorrow night. The door to the flat is unlocked, there's food and drink and… well… anything else you might need."

Gawain winked. Fucking winked and Galahad felt like every muscle in his body was going to bulge out of his skin with how tensely he was holding himself.

"Gawain!" He had to speak up to be heard through the glass, but he tried to stop himself from yelling. "I don't know what you think you're-"

"Gal!" Gawain interrupted him. "Not only am I fed up with the pair of you, I have never met two people in my life that need to just get laid! So I'm considering this two birds with one stone." Gawain stopped and took in a deep breath, as though *he* were really exasperated by the situation.

"For weeks now there has been almost flirtation, furtive glances, and not so furtive ogling. And that's just him!" Gawain jabbed a finger at the window but in the clear direction of Tristan who still stood stunned next to the counter.

“Just… sort it out will you?! See you tomorrow.”

With that Gawain walked off, got into the car and drove away.

Gal starred after them, mouth open in shock, or possibly horror. Certainly his face was red and heated.

“He… he said he would be away for the weekend so asked if I wanted to come by early and get the painting done…”

Gal jumped, Tristan’s words coming from much closer. He turned to see the man almost next to him. The slightest glean of sweat had started to form over his skin from his labour, and the dark hair the covered his chest made Gal swallow, hard.

“We should probably put that back on the door.” Tristan nodded to the sign in Gal’s hand.

“Oh! Yeah… yeah, right.”

Gal tacked it back to the door before turning back to Tristan.

“So… what do we do now?” Galahad asked with no little trepidation.

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Galahad realised this whole thing was clearly much more planned out than he had even imagined when he saw the state of Gawain’s flat.

Not only was it clean and tidy - more so than it had ever been - but it was… pleasant. There were throw cushions and candles, mostly with labels still on. He’d probably gone and bought them the day before. In fact, Gal could just imagine the whole bunch of them planning this. Bors was a not so secret romantic, and this had his name all over it.

Gal grumbled about it under his breath as he went to the little kitchen and grabbed a bottle of mead from the side.

“Don’t you think it’s a bit early for that?” Tristan asked.

Gal hadn’t even realised the man had followed him, but then what else was he to do? Even getting back on with the painting might be super awkward. It wasn’t like they could ignore being locked in together by a total idiot.

Gal drew in a deep breath, “I slept from five until seven, which isn’t enough to count as actual sleep, so technically it’s still last night and my brother has locked us in here… which I’m mortified about by the way, so I think I’ll help myself to a drink.”

He unstoppered the bottle and took a swig before grimacing. Maybe not great with the slight minty taste of his morning toothpaste still lingering.

Tristan was glowering at him and Gal snapped.

“What is your problem?!”

“I don’t like… I just…” Tristan wasn’t conventionally flustered, but he certainly wasn’t quite with it. He huffed a sigh and then glared intently at Galahad. “Pot and stupid stuff like that is one thing, but… hard drugs.” He shook his head. “I’ve seen people fuck their lives up on drugs and-”

“Wait. What the fuck are you talking about?” Galahad couldn’t help the growl in his tone, deliberately annoying banter was one thing - he’d moved onto actual anger. “This is mead, not some sort of-”

“Yeah, this is mead. But it’s all part of your problem isn’t it? The cup... like you’re proud of it! The bleary eyes, you always look a mess, never quite with it and always moody.” He huffed and shook his head. “I like you Gal, I mean… you’re attractive and I feel this spark of something when I’m near you… part of me would really like to know you better. You seem smart, you’re always reading and I love how you flirt, I always wanted to reciprocate, but… I’m not good with people, and I can’t let myself be interested in someone who needs a hit more than they need me… you’re habit it’s-”

“My what now?” Gal cut him off. The admissions were startling for many reasons. Firstly, that Tristan actually was in fact interested - and presumably was therefore interested in men. But secondly, he seemed to have quite fantastically misread the whole situation, as Gal had already suspected, though he had never imagined it would be to this degree.

Despite having already had it cross his own mind that Tristan might make assumptions, having Tristan actually voice it brought an anger up in him that he usually reserved for when Gawain was being particularly idiotic.

“You dumb fuck!” Gal snapped.

Tristan was momentarily startled by Gal’s response, but his expression quickly settled back into a well worn frown.

“Of course I fucking read all the time! Of course I look like shit and never sleep, and just… I’m constantly strung out and either exhausted or buzzing from too much coffee. I’m studying for my PhD you fucking idiot! Our parents’ died and left us money, Gawain set up this shop, I went back to college. And, between here and college, I don’t have the time to sleep much less do fucking cocaine.” Gal didn’t draw breath as he ranted.

Before Tristan had any chance to react, Gal threw up his hands in frustration and marched from the kitchen. He hadn’t planned to say any of that, much less the information about their folks, but to be perceived so incorrectly hurt and the words just fell out of their own volition.

He had planned to go to the little lounge, sit down and let his brain untwist itself. But he was so fucking done, he stomped through the room, down the narrow corridor and to the spare room he sometimes slept in. He was still grumbling as he kicked off his shoes and settled on the bed.

If Gawain was giving him the weekend off, then maybe he would just use it to fucking sleep and hope that when woke up, his ridiculous brother was back and Tristan was long gone.

*

It was the smell of food that woke him.

Galahad blinked his eyes open, trying to get his bearings for a moment before remembering he was in Gawain's spare room and exactly how that had come about. He looked over at the clock on the bedside and it was late morning, he'd had a good couple of hours sleep. Though still not enough to compensate for the massive sleep deficit he had.

Gal was almost entirely certain that no one could resist the smell of bacon cooking, least of all himself. So despite knowing that the person cooking it was the same jerk that he'd happily avoid until Gawain let them out, the lure of bacon was too good. And he was sure Tristan knew that.

So he grumbled as he pulled himself from the warm bed, muttering curses as he scrubbed a hand over his beard and tried - unsuccessfully - to tame his hair.

He made sure to yank the bedroom door open hard so that it clunked as he did so, partly in irritation and partly to alert Tristan to his presence. He hoped that the forewarning would be enough to prepare the man. He'd really appreciate if Tristan put more thought into his words before he said them. Or preferably, didn't speak at all.

So he was a little unprepared when he walked into the kitchen as Tristan plated up eggs and bacon at the same time the toaster popped - to find the man had practically prepared a speech.

"I wanted to apologise for before, for any offense I might have cau-"

Gal huffed and interrupted as he went for the toast, burning the tips of his fingers before throwing it onto the ready plate, "By making breakfast." Gal grunted the words, trying desperately not to look at Tristan's still bare - and lightly paint spattered - chest.

"And by actually apologising," Tristan practically growled, clearly still irritated by Galahad. As if he had any right to be!!

Gal sighed and began buttering the toast, taking a bite of the first slice before continuing.

"You made an assumption, it was wrong, end of story."

He watched as Tristan's jaw tightened.

Galahad sighed and conceded, "Maybe I could have reacted better. I'm tired, like, all the time, and it just makes me grouchy. You hit a nerve."

Tristan studied him for a moment, taking in his tired eyes for sure.

"Perhaps you should quit the coffee shop. It doesn't sound like you need the wages..."

“I don’t want Gawain to struggle.” Galahad admitted, looking away. Gawain was the older brother, but he had coped a lot worse with their loss than Gal had. In the beginning at least, and that desire to make sure he was ok had never stopped.

“He wouldn’t from what I’ve seen, especially not with Bors around.” Tristan raised an eyebrow as he spoke and Galahad immediately knew the expression of someone who had at least once walked in on Gawain and Bors going at it. He shuddered but said nothing as Tristan continued thoughtfully, “If you stop working here you’d have more time for your studies and to get more sleep. Maybe even go crazy and have a social life, date, things like that.”

Tristan turned to put the dirty pan in the sink, not waiting for Galahad to respond to what appeared to be a very awkward line.

“You’re assuming, again, that I don’t have chance to date.” Gal teased, feeling somewhat rewarded when the pan clattered out of Tristan’s hands. “You do like to make a lot of assumptions,” he continued, still baiting. The desire to rile the man was stronger than ever.

Tristan let out a heavy sigh before he replied, his back still to Galahad.

“Old habits. I was in Vice for… too long. I saw a lot of bad things and I don’t,” he stopped and sighed again. “It was wrong of me to assume, to judge, and I’m sorry for that.”

Gal continued to stare at his broad, naked back, speaking around his mouthful of toast as he asked, “Wait, you were a cop?”

He couldn’t quite see it, there was something of a disconnect with the idea. Though, Tristan was a dick and did have that superior air of authority… Actually, no he could totally imagine it.

Tristan turned, leaning back against the counter as he continued. “After I left the Marines it seemed like one of the few options. I was used to following orders, used to structure. I was invalided out of the Services before I was ready, but being a cop I could do.” He seemed to drift in his thoughts for a moment.

“You were a Marine?!” Gal’s voice was several pitches higher than intended.

Tristan cocked a brow at him, “This seems extraordinary to you?”

“I’m just trying to work out if you’re having me on.” Galahad grinned.

Tristan frowned and looked confused, “Why would I lie about being a marine, or a cop?”

“I figured Gawain, in his ridiculous efforts, told you about my uniform kink and you’re trying your luck.”

Galahad took immense pleasure in the colour draining from Tristan’s face. In fact he left it a good few seconds before following up with, “I joke, of course!” He chuckled.

Gal thought on it for a moment before continuing, “And as to whether it truly is something extraordinary… I don’t remotely know you well enough to say.” He couldn’t help the edge to his voice - sassy. Playful, if mean spirited.

Tristan huffed a laugh at that and nodded, “Yes, I have learned my lesson there.”

Tristan moved to the breakfast bar and took a stool, pulling one of the plates in front of himself and pushing the other to the spot in front of the spare stool. Galahad took the hint and sat. The stools were fairly close together, which resulted in Gal having no choice but to let his thigh rest against Tristan’s. He tried to ignore the heat that radiated into him.

“Why did you stop being a cop?” Galahad asked, unable to hide his curiosity. Tristan could only be ten years older than him, and yet he was essentially onto his third career.

“I didn't want to follow orders any more. So I left, set up my own business. I studied electrical engineering at college before I joined up. Got myself certified and then went from there.” He forked some bacon into his mouth and chewed thoughtfully before asking, “What do you study?”

Gal’s lips twitched into a smile, “Civil Engineering, broadly speaking. But specifically I’m looking at the structural engineering used in the building of Camelot and other old cities. Some of the techniques were very advanced but have fallen out of use. You know Hadrian’s Wall? Just north of the city... I’m looking at modernising some of the techniques that were used to create it. It could make a huge difference in safe and affordable construction.”

Tristan looked surprised for a moment and then smiled, “A noble pursuit then.”

They ate in silence for a moment before Gal swallowed and said quietly, “I know what you mean about the spark, I uh, Gawain was right, I like you too.” He cleared his throat before adding gruffly, “I don’t know that I want to do anything about it though. I mean, despite apparently liking me, your opinion of me was very... low. So…”

He trailed off when he realised Tristan was watching him intently, an stoic expression.

“I’m… It’s not an excuse, but I’m not good with people, especially pretty ones-”

Gal cut him off, “-you think I’m pretty?” His tone was mocking, sassy. But his blush gave away the flutter it caused in his chest.

And Tristan was blushing too, Gal registered a moment before the man was on him.

He wouldn’t have been able to move out of the way even if he had wanted to. And… he really didn’t want to.

Tristan was somehow on his feet, his arms around Galahad so that he didn’t fall off his stool as Tristan practically dipped him and kissed him as thoroughly as Gal had ever been kissed.

It started heated and hard but then dissolved into something slow and exploratory as Galahad snaked his arms up around Tristan.

Gal's heart was pounding as a moan escaped his lips and into Tristan's mouth.

And then hands were everywhere. Gal pulled his back enough to cup Tristan's bearded face, keeping it close as he plundered his mouth. Tristan's hands moved too, one sliding further up Galahad's back to brace him as the other moved to his hip, gripping it tightly as he pressed them tight to each other.

Gal pushed Tristan's face away, practically growling the word, "Bedroom!"

His stool clattered to the floor, but Gal was still somehow upright, in fact he was carried bodily into the next room.

And that was as far as they got as Tristan's foot caught on one of Gawain's ridiculous and abundant floor cushions and they went down. Despite being saved by the soft furnishings, the wind was immediately knocked from Gal's lungs when Tristan landed on top of him.

They both gasped for breath, eyes locking on each other moments before they grabbed for each other again, this time pulling at each other's clothing.

When Galahad's arms got caught in his t-shirt, Tristan pinned them above his head whilst Gal giggled. His laughter quickly turning to gasps as Tristan began to nuzzle at his clavicle, trailing his tongue down to Gal's left nipple and tonguing it languidly.

"Oh gods, Tristan…" Gal moaned, trembling under his touch.

Tristan nipped lightly at his flesh as he made his way down Galahad's torso and immediately began to unbutton his jeans. Galahad's breath came out shaky as anticipation coursed through him and his cock pressed painfully hard against his jeans.

Tristan growled against his skin, nosing at the thatch of hair as it was revealed, until he was finally able to get his mouth on Galahad's cock.

Despite Gal's shuddering anticipation, Tristan didn't take him into his mouth, lathering kisses and licks until finally tonguing his slit. Galahad was shaking with need, and about to beg for more when Tristan pulled back to tear his jeans all the way off.

Galahad didn't even attempt to resist as Tristan manhandled him over onto his front, canting his hips and spreading his cheeks before licking up his crack.

"Oh fuck, yes…" Galahad moaned, his arms still practically restrained as he rested forward on his elbows but pressed back onto Tristan's tongue.

Within minutes he was wet and sensitive, enjoying the ministrations of Tristan's tongue moving around and in and out of him, sure that he might come any moment.

"Ahhh, stop, stop. Just…" Gal moved forward, trying to escape Tristan's attentions before he spilled all over the pillows. But it was a moment too late, as Tristan followed him forward, spearing him as deep as he could go, sucking at his rim when Galahad cried out.

He fell forward onto the soiled cushions, and Tristan went down with him - his fully clothed form doing nothing to hide Tristan's throbbing erection. The man moved back and forth, rubbing himself against Galahad's ass as he laid open mouthed kisses over his shoulders.

Galahad moaned at the sensation even though he was already oversensitive.

"Lube," he muttered into the pillows, raising his t-shirt bound arms enough to point in the vague direction of the bedroom.

Tristan growled against his skin.

*

They lay naked on the scatter cushions, both satisfied and pleasurably achey. Galahad woke from the most restful sleep he'd had in years. His body felt heavy but in a way that spoke of the deep sleep he'd managed.

He'd been right of course, all he'd needed was a good, hard fuck and a strong body pressed against his. And Tristan had not disappointed on either count.

Tristan had been a man of few words but he had certainly out his mouth to good use, as well as the rest of him. And after a frantic search for lube and condoms, he had fucked Galahad so perfectly that Gal had momentarily forgot his own name. He had gotten hard again and came on Tristan's cock, pulling Tristan's climax from him too. They had lain on the cushions, panting, Tristan curled around him when they moved onto their sides. Completely satisfied.

In fact, Gal had fallen asleep with Tristan still inside him. He only realised this when he stirred as Tristan returned - having clearly gone to dispose of the condom - pulled a blanket up and spooned him.

Galahad stretched before melting back against Tristan once more and enjoying the soft rumble of the man as he stirred too.

"So, you want to go on a date then?" Gal asked, his mouth twitching in amusement even as he said it.

"I am old fashioned that way," Tristan replied. Galahad turned his head to see the grin on the man's face.

Gal huffed, "And yet you are happy to put the cart before the horse." His grin didn't falter and his face was beginning to ache as much as his ass.

"In this scenario are you the horse?" Tristan asked, turning to face Gal and cocking his brow.

Galahad grabbed one of the smaller cushions and swung it at the man, his laughter knocked from him as Tristan tackled him back onto the soft furnishings.

Tristan straddled him, pinning him down entirely, "Yes, I want to date you." Tristan growled.

Galahad started giggling uncontrollably.

“Okay, okay, I’ll date you. As soon as my idiot brother lets us out of here we could go on a date.”

“Like… coffee or something.” The clear taunt amused Galahad more than he had any desire to let on.

“Dinner.” Gal corrected with a raised brow.

Tristan nodded, “And until we are released?”

Galahad grinned, pulling Tristan down until their lips almost met, “Let’s keep putting the cart before the horse.”

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